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TAGS: [PREL](#) [XG](#) [EU](#) [BO](#) [MD](#) [UP](#) [RS](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: GOF: NO GSP FOR MINSK; BEWARE ANOTHER KOZAK PLAN

Classified By: A/DCM JOSIAH ROSENBLATT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B)
AND (D)

1. SUMMARY: (C) The MFA desk officer for Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova told poloff on June 14 that France fully supported the EU's decision to remove Belarus from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program and saw it as a test for Lukashenko. On Moldova, Gosset was concerned about President Voronin's bilateral discussions with Moscow and wondered if a Kozak 2007 plan was in the works. He noted that allies should encourage the 5 2 format for further talks on Transnistria. And in Ukraine, there was little news, and certainly no good news. END SUMMARY

BELARUS

2. (C) MFA desk officer for Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, Antoine Gosset, reported that France fully supported the June 13 EU Eastern Europe and Central Asia Working Group (COEST) decision to move forward with removing Belarus from the EU's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program next week. France, the UK, and others, he explained, remained pessimistic about Lukashenko's recent overtures as they appeared to be in response to Russian pressure. Recent negative signs included the visit to Belarus of Iranian President Ahmadinejad. France, Gosset said, had pushed hard for COEST to remain pragmatic and flexible, but not to enter into a "bargaining approach" with Minsk. Some members, he noted, had suggested lifting names from the visa ban list in response to the recent release of three political prisoners. At the end of the day, France and others were able to convince COEST to make GSP a test for Lukashenko and lay out the EU's expectations. The Commission would continue to move forward with Minsk on technical meetings in Brussels and one energy meeting in Minsk by year's end. If Lukashenko responds constructively despite the GSP decision, Brussels might be more inclined to discuss the possibility of revisiting existing restrictions.

MOLDOVA/TRANSNISTRIA

3. (C) Gosset expressed concern about President Voronin's bilateral discussions with Moscow over Transnistria. France, he said, was pleased that there were no unexpected surprises at the informal CIS Summit in St. Petersburg on June 9, but still believed it was possible that Putin and Voronin were discussing a revitalized Kozak style plan. Russia, he said, had made it known it was willing to get rid of Smirnov, as well as his security chief. Naturally, the question is what Russia would obtain in return. He wondered if Russia

wasn't looking for a deal that would give Putin the kind of credibility he needs to make him look like an honest broker on Kosovo. Gosset stressed that interested parties, like the U.S. and France, should encourage Voronin to stick to the 5 2 format, in order to keep the process fair and transparent.

UKRAINE

¶4. (C) Exasperated, Gosset noted that "Ukraine is a complete mess." He stressed that for the moment France remained in a wait-and-see mode, but that the Ukrainian government was barely functioning. France had a lot of hope a few years ago, he said, but the recent crises have demonstrated what it knew all along: Ukrainian leaders, however well intentioned, did not understand democratic ideals of governing and instead sought to consolidate power through corruption and special interests. Gosset said that the GOF expected to renew its bilateral agreement for assistance to Ukraine by the end of the year, but was only doing so as a confidence-building measure and did not see the gesture as having any political impact. The signing, not yet planned, would likely be the only high level diplomatic contact between the two countries for the 2007 calendar year.

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